



# CCM 2014 Testimony

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## ***APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE***

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The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

### **HB 5030, "An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015"**

CCM applauds the Governor for his recently proposed increase in the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. The increase demonstrates a clear commitment to take the State farther down the path to meeting its education funding obligation to towns and cities.

CCM, however, seeks further clarification as to the distribution of the grant funds.

Current state statute provides for a continued phase-in of the ECS grant in FY 15 toward a fully funded grant. Section 10-262h of the Connecticut General Statutes lays out the formula to determine how much ECS funding each municipality should receive. However, the proposed language in HB 5030 would replace that statutory language with specific town-by-town dollar amounts for the ECS grant.

CCM therefore, seeks clarification regarding the removal of the ECS formula, specifically;

1. What was the impetus for the language removal?
2. How are the ECS grant amounts in the new language calculated?
3. If the amounts in HB 5030 are based on the language that was eliminated, does this mean the distribution was truly based on the formula and updated data?

### Special Education

CCM would like to raise an additional concern regarding the funding of special education in the State of Connecticut. Special education costs now exceed about \$1.8 billion statewide. Of these expenditures, towns and cities pay for about 60 percent of that cost. CCM strongly feels that special education students should be a responsibility of the State as a whole and not just the host community.

The primary state grant for special education is the Excess Cost-Student Based grant. This grant has been level-funded for several years at about \$140 million, in spite of the growing costs of special education. This leaves municipalities and their property tax payers with the responsibility of funding the remaining shortfall each year. CCM urges the Appropriations Committee to relieve hometowns of this mandate and fully fund the Excess Cost-Student Based grant.

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If you have any questions, please contact Ron Thomas ([rthomas@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rthomas@ccm-ct.org)), George Rafael ([grafael@ccm-ct.org](mailto:grafael@ccm-ct.org)) or Chelsey Worth ([cworth@ccm-ct.org](mailto:cworth@ccm-ct.org)) of CCM at (203) 498-3000.